



## **IMPAIRED DRIVING IS A DEADLY THREAT TO AMERICA'S COMMUNITIES**

After several years of improvement, more recent impaired driving statistics released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show an alarming trend: Impaired driving-related deaths significantly increased from 15,786 in 1999 to 16,653 in 2000. We have reached a crossroads in our efforts to prevent this deadly crime. America is at a crucial point where we must all do more if we are to significantly reduce the number of alcohol- and drug-related crashes.

As a traffic safety advocate, you understand the tragic toll every one of these deaths has on thousands of families and hundreds of communities nationwide. As these latest statistics indicate, too many Americans continue to make the wrong choice and drive impaired. Every year 1.5 million impaired drivers are arrested yet only one arrest occurs for every 772 instances of driving under the influence of alcohol. As a result one in three Americans will be affected by this violent crime in their lifetime. The reality is that most impaired drivers arrive home safely and are never punished for their crimes, which only reinforces their future decisions.

## **THERE IS NO DEBATE – AMERICANS SUPPORT GETTING TOUGH ON IMPAIRED DRIVERS**

Studies show that the majority of Americans consider drunk driving one of our nation's most important social issues, ahead of healthcare, poverty/hunger, racism and education. Nearly 97 percent of Americans view drunk driving as a major threat to the community. As a result, the majority of Americans support increased use of saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints to ensure their safety.

We have reached a crossroads in our efforts to prevent this deadly crime. If we're to significantly reduce the number of alcohol- and drug-related injuries and fatalities, we must all do more to change the perception that impaired driving is merely a traffic offense. It's a deadly crime that has severe personal consequences that will no longer be tolerated.

## **GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE BY JOINING THE YOU DRINK & DRIVE. YOU LOSE. NATIONAL MOBILIZATION**

That's why NHTSA and the International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, National Sheriffs' Association Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association and Operation C.A.R.E are asking you to help promote and take part in the *National Holiday Lifesaver Mobilization*, December 21-23, 2001. This mobilization is sponsored by the *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* campaign.

Every year the *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* campaign sponsors national mobilizations in July and December to help State and local officials increase the visibility of their efforts to arrest and prosecute impaired drivers. The mobilizations take place during these months for a reason: Summer is when alcohol-related crashes are at their highest and December is an appropriate time to promote the issue, given the public perception that holiday celebrations increase the consumption of alcohol and impaired driving.

Launched in December 1999, the *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* campaign is a national partnership of criminal justice and traffic safety partners in all 50 states that are committed to reducing deaths from impaired driving to no more than 11,000 by 2005 nationwide. The goal is to build on the



## IMPAIRED DRIVING IS A CRIME THAT KILLS

momentum and the hard work already taking place in communities throughout America, aimed at stopping impaired driving and saving lives. Your commitment to this national challenge at the local level will help save lives and give your citizens the gift of life this holiday season.

**PUBLICIZE WHAT YOU'RE ALREADY DOING**

As with most states and communities, your partnership is already engaged in the fight against this deadly crime. By joining the campaign, you will become part of a powerful voice that is reaching millions of Americans through national and local media and the Internet.

And as with any criminal offense, the best way to deter impaired driving is through a highly recognizable media campaign conducted by the entire community and criminal justice system – enforcement, prosecution, adjudications and sanctions – to reinforce the message that violators are criminals and that there is a high risk of being caught, prosecuted and jailed.

If your State has new .08 blood alcohol content laws or existing administrative license revocation, zero tolerance and vehicle confiscation laws, use them to show the consequences of driving impaired. Prosecutors and judges also can provide the court's perspective and discuss the amount of time and money you could lose as a result of an impaired driving offense.

This kit will help you coordinate your media outreach efforts with the national campaign and mobilize your community to deter impaired driving before it happens.

**THE TRAFFIC SAFETY ADVOCATE'S ROLE**

Each of us has a role in the mobilization, yet the goal is the same – preventing impaired driving. As a community partner your role is crucial. A community's commitment to end impaired driving should involve a wide array of business, volunteer and civic groups. Contact groups already active in the community, including Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Students Against Destructive Decisions, the Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, the Lions Club, religious groups, schools and PTAs and other organizations, and ask them to inform their members about the mobilization. These groups also can provide volunteer support for the mobilization.

- Here are some ideas to get them involved:
- Host a town hall meeting on ways to reduce impaired driving.
- Publicly endorse the community's mobilization by sending letters to the editor of the local newspaper in support of local mobilizations.
- Work with area businesses and taxicab companies to create alternatives to impaired driving – implement sober ride and designated driver programs.
- Contact organizers of events where alcohol is a focus to distribute literature and encourage the use of designated drivers and sober ride programs.
- Conduct fundraising events (i.e., silent auctions, bake sales, pot luck dinners, etc.) to provide seed money for designated driver and sober ride programs.
- Provide volunteers to criminal justice partners to assist with publicity, administrative duties and operating sobriety checkpoints.



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- Recruit family members of victims to participate in media outreach activities.
- Use newsletters to raise awareness of the consequences of impaired driving, share non-alcoholic drink recipes and provide safe hosting tips.
- Invite speakers to your meetings (law enforcement, emergency room doctors and nurses, victims, etc.) to speak about the dangers of impaired driving to increase support for your efforts. Local hospitals, fire and rescue officials or MADD chapters are excellent places to recruit speakers.
- Work with the Criminal Justice System to Get the Word Out

You can't have an effective deterrent message if the public doesn't know what your criminal justice partners are doing and the consequences for violating the law. Members of criminal justice agencies are more likely to participate in campaign activities if obstacles that inhibit their participation are removed. Make it easy and everyone will join the effort. Remind them that every law enforcement agency is legally able to conduct saturation patrols to catch impaired drivers. Small- and large-scale sobriety checkpoints also are allowed in most states and can serve as effective high profile deterrents. The good news is that most agencies are

already arresting impaired drivers on a daily basis and will welcome your help in bringing greater visibility to their efforts. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Identify organizations that have structured similar outreach activities, get their advice and assistance in planning.
- Call a special meeting of criminal justice departmental and agency chiefs, sheriffs and troopers throughout the state. Ask them to take an active interest in the campaign and encourage others to participate.
- Solicit input from prosecutors, judicial officials, and law enforcement agencies on timing, strategies, and evaluation methods.
- Allow individual departments to devise targeted implementation activities for the campaign.
- Make sure outside groups involved in the campaign have a law enforcement representative available who is familiar with the activities of the campaign.
- Let judges and prosecutors know that there may be an initial increase in impaired driving arrests. Now that the BAC limit has changed from .10 to .08 in many States, cases that may have been 'on the edge' of the limit can now be prosecuted fully.
- Distribute information on the change in the law to motorists who are stopped. A good time to do this would be at a sobriety checkpoint or during a saturation patrol.



## RELEASE

**[Your Letterhead]**

For Immediate Release

**[Date]** Contact: **[Name]** **[Phone]****THIS CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY SEASON: YOU DRINK & DRIVE. YOU LOSE.****[Organization]** Give's **[CITY/TOWN]** Families the Gift of Life

With more people expected to be on the highways during the weekend before the Christmas holiday, this could be one of the deadliest periods ever for impaired driving fatalities.

To protect **[CITY/TOWN]** families during this long holiday period, local criminal justice agencies will be out in full force December 21-23 to protect citizens from impaired drivers. As part of the National Holiday Lifesavers mobilization, local officials will conduct saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints to arrest and prosecute impaired drivers to the fullest extent of the law. The mobilization is sponsored by the national You Drink & Drive. You Lose. campaign.

"Impaired driving is no accident – It's a crime that kills every 33 minutes," said **[LOCAL OFFICIAL]**. "Too many people still don't understand it's a crime to mix alcohol and driving. Drunk drivers are reckless criminals that are a threat to everyone's safety. There will be no warnings issued this weekend. Our message is a simple one – You Drink and Drive. You Lose. Violators will lose their license, their automobile, time from their job, and money in high fines and court costs, as well as possibly face imprisonment for vehicular manslaughter or homicide."

After several years of improvement, more recent impaired driving statistics released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show an alarming trend – Impaired driving-related deaths significantly increased from 15,786 in 1999 to 16,653 in 2000. As part of a national strategy to reduce impaired driving crashes, the U.S. Department of Transportation has set a goal of no more than 11,000 alcohol-related fatalities annually by 2005.

Studies from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show that the majority of Americans consider drunk driving one of the nation's most important social issues, ahead of healthcare, poverty/hunger, racism and education. Nearly 97 percent of Americans view drunk driving as a major threat to the community. As a result, the majority of Americans support increased use of enforcement efforts like rolling saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints to protect citizens from impaired drivers. Furthermore, two-thirds of Americans also strongly endorse the use of stricter and more severe penalties against drunk drivers.



"Around the holidays, employee parties and other celebrations, combined with increased stress and fatigue, increase the risk for impaired driving-related fatalities. Risking lives—your own and others' is no way to celebrate the holidays," said **[LOCAL OFFICIAL]**. "Party hosts and businesses especially need to recognize their responsibility and know that they can be held liable if their guests or patrons cause an alcohol-related crash."

Nine out of 10 Americans who participate in social events where alcohol is served believe that people should use designated drivers. **[LOCAL ORGANIZATION]** suggests that employee parties and other celebrations include alcohol-free beverages and protein-rich foods. Along with awareness of guests' consumption, hosts should also remind everyone to plan ahead:

- Don't risk it – If you plan to drive, don't drink.
- Choose a sober designated driver.
- Take mass transit or a taxicab.
- Spend the night where the activity is being held.
- Report impaired drivers to law enforcement.

*You Drink & Drive. You Lose*, launched in December 1999, is a comprehensive impaired driving prevention program focused on highly visible criminal justice-related efforts to deter impaired driving and is designed for use by states and communities to save lives and reach the national goal. Thanks to the combined efforts of thousands of devoted public and private partners, more than 150 million Americans have learned about this lifesaving message from their newspaper, from the Internet, and from radio and television broadcasts.

National, State and local activities during this holiday season reinforce December's designation as *National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month* (3D Month). For more information about the campaign and 3D Month, please visit [www.nhtsa.dot.gov](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov)





## TALKING POINTS

- Every December, thousands of Americans chose to drive after drinking alcohol or using drugs. Impaired driving is no accident. It's a serious crime that kills someone every 33 minutes.
- After several years of improvement, more recent impaired driving statistics released by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration show an alarming trend – Impaired driving-related deaths significantly increased from 15,786 in 1999 to 16,653 in 2000.
- With more people expected to travel during the weekend before the Christmas holiday, this could be one of the deadliest periods ever for impaired driving fatalities.
- To protect **[CITY/TOWN]** families during this long holiday period, local criminal justice agencies will be out in full force December 21 to 23 to keep citizens safe from impaired drivers.
- As part of the *National Holiday Lifesavers Mobilization*, local law enforcement will be conducting rolling saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints to identify and arrest impaired drivers. The mobilization is sponsored by the *You Drink and Drive. You Lose.* campaign.
- There will be no warnings this weekend. Our message is a simple one – *You Drink and Drive. You Lose.* Violators will lose their license, automobile, time from their job, and lose money in high fines and court costs as well as possibly face imprisonment for vehicular manslaughter or homicide.
- Nationally, impaired driving-related fatalities are increasing, killing nearly 17,000 people each year. More than 300,000 people are injured.
- Although every year 1.5 million impaired drivers are arrested, only one arrest occurs for every 772 instances of driving under the influence of alcohol. As a result one in three Americans will be affected by this violent crime in their lifetime.
- The key to reversing this alarming trend is taking a systematic approach with law enforcement, prosecutors, judicial officials and traffic safety partners, each doing their part, to protect innocent victims from impaired drivers.
- I can assure you there is no greater tragedy for a law enforcement officer than knocking on the door of a victim's family to tell them that they have lost a loved one to this senseless crime.
- We are reminding everyone:
  - Don't risk it – If you plan to drive, don't drink.
  - Choose a sober designated driver.
  - Take mass transit or a taxicab.
  - Spend the night where the activity is being held.
  - Report impaired drivers to law enforcement.
- Studies show that the majority of Americans consider drunk driving one of the nation's most important social issues, ahead of healthcare, poverty/hunger, racism and education.
- Nearly 97 percent of Americans view drunk driving as a major threat to the community.
- The national *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* campaign is a partnership of criminal justice and traffic safety partners in all 50 states committed to reducing deaths from impaired driving to no more than 11,000 by 2005 nationwide.
- Saturation patrols are increased enforcement efforts, often involving multiple agencies, that target a specific area to identify and arrest impaired drivers.
- At sobriety checkpoints, law enforcement officers evaluate drivers for signs of alcohol or drug impairment at certain points on the roadway. Vehicles are stopped in a specific sequence—such as every vehicle or every fourth, fifth or sixth vehicle—depending on the personnel available and traffic conditions.
- When adequately publicized saturation patrols and checkpoints increase the perceived risk of arrest, influence drivers to make the right choice, and remind the general public that impaired driving is a crime.
- Please celebrate responsibly and don't take a chance – because chances are you will be caught. The choice is yours – designate a driver or one will be appointed for you – straight to jail. Remember: *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.*



As you celebrate this holiday season with family, friends and co-workers, toasting the memories of the passing year and the hopes and dreams of the coming year, don't forget to make the most important resolution – designate a sober driver.

Too many people never see the New Year because they were the innocent victims of one of the most often committed criminal offenses – impaired driving. Drunk drivers are reckless criminals who kill every 33 minutes. Every New Year, I face the deadly aftermath of the holiday season. The worse part of any officer's duty is to ring the doorbell of a victim's home. Even more tragic is the fact that these crashes are 100 percent preventable.

Too many people continue to view impaired driving merely as a traffic offense. Don't be fooled. It's a crime that kills and a crime that will not be tolerated in our community.

To protect **[CITY/TOWN]** families during this long holiday period, local criminal justice agencies will take part in the *National Holiday Lifesavers Mobilization*, December 21-23, 2001, to protect citizens from impaired drivers. Local officials will conduct saturation patrols and sobriety checkpoints to arrest and prosecute impaired drivers to the fullest extent of the law. The mobilization is sponsored by the national *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* campaign.

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16,653 in 2000. We have come to a crossroad in our efforts to prevent this deadly crime. America is at a crucial point where we must all do more as communities and as individuals if we are to make significant declines in the number of alcohol- and drug-related crashes.

That's why it's so important to celebrate sensibly. It takes just a little forethought to designate a sober driver before you head out for a party. Barring that, use taxi services and other alternative transportation or if possible, spend the night rather than driving home impaired. And don't make the mistake of thinking just one eggnog won't matter; fatigue and stress— common around the holidays—can escalate the effects of alcohol to deadly levels.

If you're hosting a party, accept responsibility for your guests' safety. Don't serve alcohol to underage guests or to anyone who has clearly "had enough." It's not just the conscientious thing to do; serving those underage is illegal, and serving anyone who is visibly intoxicated can leave you liable. Offer non-alcoholic beverages and protein-rich snacks. Stop serving alcohol at least one hour before the party ends. Take the car keys away from any guest who is impaired; call a cab or ask a non-drinking guest to provide a safe ride home.

Employers, too, must realize their role in hosting holiday office parties. Share the message of *You Drink & Drive. You Lose.* through your company wellness program or in your employee newsletter. At your company gathering, hand out free taxi passes, distribute a limited number of tickets to exchange for alcoholic drinks and sign up designated drivers in advance.

Too much trouble, you say? Then consider the financial and emotional costs of an employee's involvement in a crash – soaring medical insurance premiums, worker's compensation lost productivity and damaged employee morale.



## O P - E D   A R T I C L E

This holiday season, please celebrate responsibly and don't take a chance because chances are you will be caught. The choice is yours – designate a driver or **[LOCAL ORGANIZATION]** will appoint one for you – straight to jail.

**YOU DRINK & DRIVE. YOU LOSE. CAMPAIGN**

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2005 nationwide. Thanks to the combined efforts of thousands of devoted public and private partners, more than 150 million Americans have learned about the campaign from the newspaper, from the Internet, and from radio and television broadcasts. National, statewide and local activities this holiday season support December's designation as *National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month* (3D Month). For more information about the campaign and 3D Month, please visit

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